Message Text

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P R 111257Z JUL 78 FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2698 INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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GENEVA FOR PHELAN AND BARRACLOUGH

E.O. 11652: N/A TAGS: ETRD, EPAP, IN SUBJECT: TEXTILES

REF:STATE 173842

1. EMBOFF DISCUSSED TEXTILE PROBLEM WITH MINCOMMERCE JOINT SECRETARY B.L. DAS JULY 11. MEETING WAS OCCASIONED BY THE APPEARANCE ON FRONT PAGE OF ECONOMIC TIMES JULY 9 ORE REPORT THAT COMMERCE MINISTER DHARIA HAD WRITTEN PERSONAL LETTER TO SECRETARY KREPS REJECTING US PROPOSAL TO SOLVE CURRENT PROBLEM BY INCLUDING HANDLOOM APPAREL UNDER GROUP II. DAS OBVIOUSLY HAD NOT YET RECEIVED REPORT FROM WASHINGTON OF LATEST INTERAGENCY GROUP DECISION (REFTEL) SO EMBOFF DID NOT RPT NOT INTRODUCE THIS NEW PROPOSAL.

2. AFTER CONFIRMING DHARIA LETTER TO SECRETARY KREPS (WITH COPY TO AMBASSADOR STRAUSS) DAS CATEGORIZED US PREFERRED SOLUTION AS INTRODUCING A SUBSTANTIVE MODIFICATION OF THE AGREEMENT IN RESPONSE TO A TECHNICAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROBLEM. FURTHER, THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE WHICH THE US WAS RAISING WAS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT DURING THE NEGOTIATION OF THE AGREEMENT AND CONTINUED TO BE SENSITIVE. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT USG MIGHT HAVE LEGAL DIFFICULTY IN MODIFYING IMPORT DATA AFTER THE EVENT. IN SUCH A CASE, ASSUMING AGREEMENT THAT STATISTICAL ERROR HAD TAKEN PLACE, SOLUTION COULD BE FOUND IN

ONE-TIME ADJUSTMENT OF GROUP II LIMIT.

- 3. FOR ITS PART GOI SAW VERY STRONG DEMAND FOR INDIAN TEXTILES CONTINUING IN THE UNITED STATES. DAS SAID. BUT IT WAS PREPARED TO OPERATE WITHIN THE CONSTRAINTS OF THE AGREEMENT WHICH HAD BEEN NEGOTIATED ONLY SIX MONTHS AGO TO COVER A MULTI-YEAR PERIOD.
- 4. EMBOFF SUGGESTED THAT SUBTLETIES OF THE PROVISIONS AFFECTING "ELEPHANT" PRODUCTS CREATED UNCERTAINTIES IN THE TRADE WHICH ADVERSELY AFFECTED INDIA'S EXPORT INTERESTS. REGULARIZING THESE ITEMS IN SOME WAY WOULD THEREFORE BE OF BENEFIT TO BOTH PARTIES. DAS ADMITTED THAT NEW AGREEMENT HAD HAD A DIFFICULT BREAKING-IN PERIOD. BY NOW, HOWEVER, GOI'S SYSTEM OF KEEPING EXPORTERS INFORMED WAS OPERATING WELL AND WAS FULLY UNDERSTOOD. SIMILARLY, US IMPORTERS COULD GET ADEQUATE INFROMATION FROM CUSTOMS DATA.
- 5. EMBOFF ASKED DAS IF HE HAD ANY ESTIMATE OF VALUE OF GOODS BLOCKED BY US EMBARGO. HE DID NOT BUT THOUGHT THAT THE 14 MILLION SYE ADJUSTMENT TO GROUP II WHICH GOI HAD REQUESTED WOULD TAKE CARE OF THAT PROBLEM. HE DEFINED PIPELINE AS INCLUDING GOODS NOT ONLY SHIPPED AND ELD AT PORTS BUT ALSO GOODS CONTRACTED FOR AND NOT YET SHIPPED. HE THOUGHT LATTER CATEGORY WAS STILL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUBSTANTIAL DESPITE LATENESS OF THE SEASON.

7. EMBASSY RECEIVED REQUEST JULY 11 FOR AMBASSADOR TO MEET WITH MINISTER DHARIA ON TEXTILE ISSUE. BECUASE OF SCHEDULING DIFFICULTIES, MEETING HAS BEEN SET FOR FRIDAY, JULY 14 AT 11 AM. IN VIEW OF US PROPOSAL REPORTED REFTEL, BY THAT TIME BALL WILL BE BACK ON INDIAN SIDE OF COURT AND WE WILL REPORT MINISTER'S REACTION.

GOHEEN

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